



**Commonwealth of Kentucky
Personnel Cabinet Communications Office**

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Blue Ribbon Merit Task Force Votes on Recommendations
*Top Issues include Political Discrimination, Classification, Drug Testing,
40-hour work week*

FRANKFORT, Ky. - Members of the Blue Ribbon Task Force for the Merit System voted on the 27 proposed recommendations today, four months after the task force was formed by Governor Fletcher to review and make recommendations on the merit system.

"I am pleased the task force has come together to help reform the outdated merit system" Task Force Chairman and Personnel Cabinet Secretary Erwin Roberts said. "Now I look ahead to working with the Governor and legislators to move these recommendations forward."

Among recommendations approved by the bipartisan task force is maintaining civil service protections against political influence in the selection of qualified state employees and existing merit employees, and also clarifying prohibitions against political discrimination within KRS18A.140(1).

Other approved recommendations concern:

- Implementing a feasibility study for imposing drug testing for new hires and reasonable suspicion drug/alcohol testing
- Studying the feasibility of establishing background checks before employment and a recommendation to the legislature to appropriate funding for the personnel cabinet to conduct background checks

- Establishing an optional 40-hour work week on a per cabinet basis and compensating employees for the additional time worked
- Reducing the number of job classifications by 40 to 60 percent
- New HRIS computer system; promotional and career ladders
- EEO/recruitment of qualified veterans, minorities, women and disabled/Affirmative action plan; update to statutes to permit an Affirmative Action Plan
- Ongoing review of the Merit System
- Limiting burrowing of non-merit employees into the merit system late in an administration
- Clarification of topic areas under the scope of the Personnel Board and the Personnel Cabinet
- Mediation/Peer Review/Grievance Process
- Reporting requirements in KRS 18A.030 to be reviewed
- Personnel Board decisions to be made available for review electronically, organized by the statutory basis for appeal
- Personnel Board to be subject to the Executive Branch Ethics Code
- Enhanced military leave to 21 calendar days, up from 15
- Adopt a uniform leave request form for KRS 18A employees
- Maintain annual increment and maximum salaries, grandfathering in current state employees
- Ability to place employees on paid leave
- Evaluations
- Ability for merit employees to run for political office, to give notice upon filing

Governor Fletcher will receive a report on the Merit Task Force Recommendations December 1, 2005. The report will include employee recommendations garnered at Employee Input Meetings held across the Commonwealth last month.

To view today's task force meeting. log onto www.ket.org and click on the "Merit System Task Force" link. Video of the meeting will remain available in KET's Web archives. To view employee input from meetings held across the state, see <http://personnel.ky.gov/NR/ronlyres/D773C157-B95A-4AA8-8B5D-09AB59238A4A/0/faq.pdf>